

APRIL 2025

# Growing Up in Queensland

REPORT DISCUSSION PAPER



Queensland  
Family & Child  
Commission



# How are Queensland's children and families?

## Confirming the Commission's monitoring framework for our *Growing Up in Queensland* report

There are 1.7 million children and young people in Queensland. Their lives are shaped by the wellbeing of their families, their neighbourhoods and their communities.

We cannot separate the human experience into government portfolios, and the strengths and challenges experienced by one family member can influence the experience of other family members.

By analysing measures of family and community wellbeing, we can determine a clear and holistic understanding of wellbeing across stages of child and family development. Our challenge isn't the availability of information. There's a huge amount of data out there about children and families, but it's scattered, and the pieces are often collected for funding or compliance reasons. Those grains of data in information silos don't tell a holistic story about the wellbeing of Queensland's children, young people and families.

In 2024 the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) produced the *Growing Up in Queensland* report. It pieced together data from non-government organisations, researchers, and many government departments, including unpublished government data sourced under our powers authorised by the *Family and Child Commission Act*.

The *Growing Up in Queensland 2024* report sought to tell the story of child and family wellbeing in Queensland by providing a comprehensive reference for researchers, and policy-and decision-makers. It contains extensive data and evidence about key issues affecting Queensland families, collated from contributions from over 30 individual data custodians across 270 indicator points, including breakdowns by child safety regions.

In 2025 we will again produce a report. To ensure the relevance of the measures and indicators we will use, we are asking for feedback.

This paper seeks your input and advice on how we should monitor the safety and wellbeing of the children and families in Queensland.

You are invited to send your feedback to [principal.commissioner@qfcc.qld.gov.au](mailto:principal.commissioner@qfcc.qld.gov.au)

**Please note:** In this discussion paper and the *Growing Up in Queensland* report, the term "child" in narrative encompasses individuals under the age of 25 years. However, when data is referenced, the terms "child" and "young person" are defined based on age ranges, where a child refers to individuals aged 0 to 11 years and a young person refers to individuals aged 12 to 25 years.

## The Nest Wellbeing Framework

To monitor the wellbeing of Queensland children, we use the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) Nest Wellbeing Framework (the Framework). This Framework recognises that childhood development, and family and community wellbeing form part of an interconnected system around each Queensland child. It also recognises that it is not possible to separate the wellbeing of a child from the wellbeing of their family and community.

The Framework identifies six interrelated **domains** that are essential for the wellbeing of children:

1. **Valued, Loved and Safe** – Ensuring that children feel secure, supported, and protected from harm in their family, community, and broader environment.
2. **Healthy** – Promoting physical, mental, and emotional health through access to healthcare, nutrition, and opportunities for physical activity.
3. **Learning** – Supporting access to quality education, skill development, and lifelong learning to enable children to reach their full potential.
4. **Participating** – Encouraging children to actively engage in decisions that affect them, have their voices heard, and are involved in family, community, civic, and cultural life.
5. **Material Basics** – Ensuring children and families have access to essentials like housing, food, clothing, and financial security to support wellbeing.
6. **Positive Sense of Identity and Culture** – Helping children develop self-confidence, resilience, and a strong cultural identity, including recognition and support for First Nations children's connection to culture and community.

These domains work together to create a holistic approach to child wellbeing, recognising that no single factor alone determines positive outcomes for children.

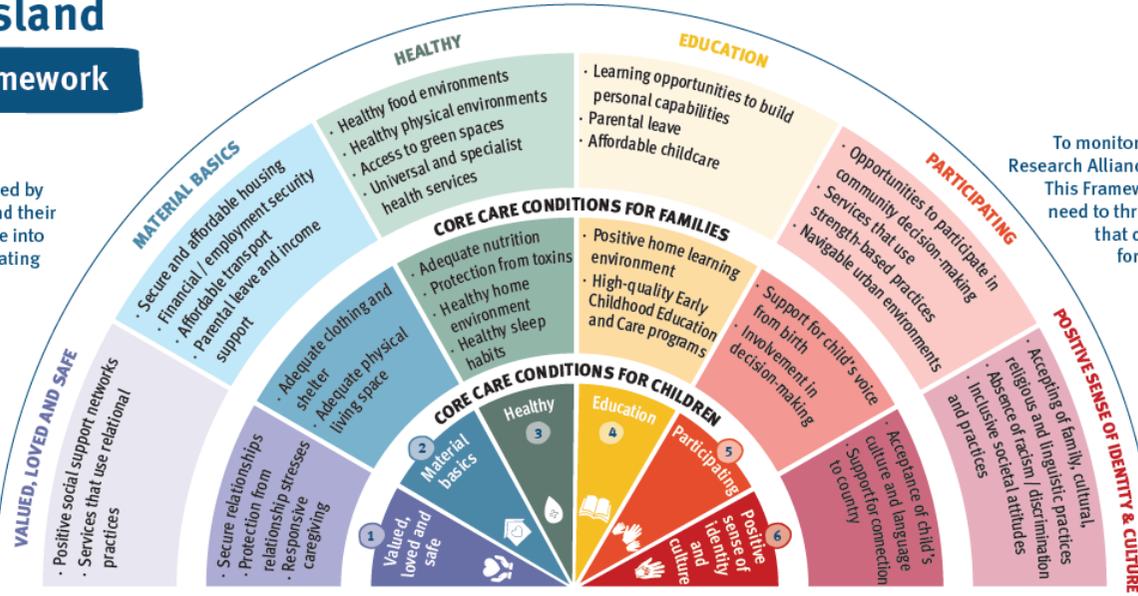
A community that is safe is more likely to have children who are safe; and a community that has poor access to material basics is more likely to have children whose material basic needs are not met. The Framework provides the QFCC with the best tool to deliver on our legal responsibility to 'promote and advocate for the responsibility of families and communities to protect and care for children'.

Incorporating measures of family and community wellbeing into our Growing Up in Queensland report provides clarity and a comprehensive understanding of child and family wellbeing across all stages of development.

# Growing Up in Queensland

## Child and Family Wellbeing Framework

The safety and wellbeing of every Queenslander is shaped by the wellbeing of their families, their neighbourhoods and their communities. We cannot separate the human experience into government portfolios, and we believe that by incorporating measures of community and family wellbeing, we can provide the clearest and most holistic understanding of child and family wellbeing across all stages of child development.



To monitor the wellbeing of Queensland children, we use the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) Nest Wellbeing Framework. This Framework captures factors that children, families and communities need to thrive across six critical life domains. The Framework recognises that childhood development, and family and community wellbeing form part of an interconnected system around each Queensland child. It also recognises that it is not possible to separate the wellbeing of a child from the wellbeing of their family and community.

A community that is safe is more likely to have children who are safe; and a community that has poor access to material basics is more likely to have children whose material basic needs are not met. The Framework provides the Commission with the best tool to deliver on our legal responsibility to 'promote and advocate for the responsibility of families and communities to protect and care for children and young people'.

### 1 Being valued, loved and safe

<b>Goal 1.1:</b> Families meet the needs of their children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people have loving, trusting relationships with family and other adults</li> <li>Children and young people in out-of-home care feel cared for and have trusting relationships with adults</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 1.2:</b> Children and young people feel they are important to others and feel valued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people have supportive, trusting relationships with friends</li> <li>Children and young people feel positive about their future</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 1.3:</b> Families are safe places for children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people are not impacted by family conflict</li> <li>Children and young people feel safe at home</li> <li>Children and young people are protected from domestic and family violence</li> <li>Where there are concerns about a child's or young person's safety, they can be cared for away from home</li> <li>There are sufficient foster and kinship carers to accommodate children and young people in out-of-home care</li> <li>Children and young people in out-of-home care feel safe and secure</li> <li>Children and young people are supported during parental imprisonment</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 1.4:</b> Communities are safe places for children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people can access support services</li> <li>Children and young people do not experience bullying</li> <li>Children and young people feel safe in their community</li> <li>Children and young people are not victims of crime</li> <li>Few children and young people are involved with the youth justice system</li> <li>Children and young people's deaths are prevented</li> </ul>



### 2 Having material basics

<b>Goal 2.1:</b> Children, young people and families have financial stability and money for necessities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people are not being raised in poverty</li> <li>Parents and carers are employed</li> <li>Families can access family support payments when needed</li> <li>Families have sufficient income to be able to provide necessities for their children and young people</li> <li>Young people are employed</li> <li>Young people leaving care receive sufficient support to transition to adulthood</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 2.2:</b> Children, young people and families have adequate, secure, stable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Home ownership and rent is affordable for families</li> <li>Families and young people do not experience homelessness</li> <li>Families and young people do not live in overcrowded homes</li> <li>Families can access public and social housing when needed</li> <li>Children and young people in out-of-home care experience a low number of placement changes</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 2.3:</b> Children, young people and their families have access to food, suitable and safe technology, transport and personal items (clothing, school supplies, or sporting equipment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people have food security</li> <li>Children and young people have access to suitable and safe communication and technology including access to the internet</li> <li>Children, young people and their families have access to a vehicle or other suitable transport</li> <li>Children and young people have access to essential personal items</li> </ul>



### 3 Being healthy

<b>Goal 3.1:</b> Newborns and infants are given the best start to life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women have healthy pregnancies</li> <li>The number of births to women aged under 20 years is low</li> <li>Babies are healthy at birth</li> <li>Newborns and infants have the best start to life</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 3.2:</b> Parents and carers are supported to maintain their own health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents and carers have good physical and mental health and levels of parental substance use are low</li> <li>Parents and carers facing health challenges receive support</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 3.3:</b> Children and young people have good physical health and receive appropriate support for their physical health needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people have good physical health</li> <li>Children are immunised</li> <li>Children and young people with disability have their support needs met</li> <li>Children and young people have healthy teeth</li> <li>Young people avoid smoking, drinking and using other drugs</li> <li>Children and young people lead a healthy lifestyle</li> <li>Children and young people receive appropriate and timely support for their health needs</li> <li>Rates of non-preventable child deaths are reducing</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 3.4:</b> Children and young people have good mental health and receive appropriate support for their mental health needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people have high levels of wellbeing and good mental health</li> <li>Children and young people receive appropriate support for their mental and emotional health needs</li> <li>Young people with eating disorders receive treatment</li> </ul>



### 4 Being engaged in education

<b>Goal 4.1:</b> Families are engaged with their children's learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children are regularly read to at home</li> <li>Families are actively engaged with their children's school</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 4.2:</b> Children receive early childhood education and are supported to transition into school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children participate in quality early childhood education and care</li> <li>Children are supported to transition into school</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 4.3:</b> Children and young people succeed at school and feel safe, included and valued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people regularly attend school</li> <li>Children and young people are able to meet academic standards</li> <li>Children and young people do not experience suspensions and exclusions from school</li> <li>Children and young people are able to cope with school pressures</li> <li>Children and young people feel safe, included and valued at school</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 4.4:</b> Young people successfully complete school and are equipped with life skills to transition into adulthood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young people complete high school</li> <li>Young people are engaging with post-school education and training pathways</li> <li>Youth unemployment is low</li> </ul>



### 5 Participating in their communities

<b>Goal 5.1:</b> Communities are positive places for children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people feel proud to be part of their community and feel that it has the things they need for a positive and thriving future</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 5.2:</b> Children and young people can enjoy leisure and recreation activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people think there are a lot of fun things to do in their neighbourhood</li> <li>Children and young people participate in recreational and leisure activities</li> <li>Children and young people safely engage with social media and other digital technologies</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 5.3:</b> Children and young people have opportunities to contribute to and participate in their community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people participate in community-building activities</li> <li>Young people are enrolled to vote</li> <li>Young people have a driver's licence</li> <li>Young people have employment opportunities</li> <li>Children and young people can make decisions about their lives</li> </ul>



### 6 Having a positive sense of identity and culture

<b>Goal 6.1:</b> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people feel supported in their cultural identity and spiritual wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people feel connected to and supported in their culture</li> <li>The systems supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are culturally safe</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 6.2:</b> Children, young people and their families feel safe and supported in expressing their identity, culture and spiritual beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people report a sense of belonging through spiritual or cultural beliefs</li> <li>Children and young people have confidence that their identity, culture, and spiritual beliefs are respected and valued</li> <li>Funding is provided to support multicultural events</li> </ul>



## 1. Children and families are valued, loved and safe

Being valued, loved and safe means that a child grows up experiencing loving, trusting relationships either with their family or with other nurturing and safe adults in their lives. Growing up in a loving and safe environment, including a safe community, is critical for supporting children and young people’s development.

To feel valued, loved and safe, children and young people need positive relationships with their family and peers. This enables them to trust connections with adults in their life and have a sense of personal and community safety.

As children become older, positive connections with friends become an increasingly important source of social and emotional support. Children and young people who know they are loved and important to people in their lives are more likely to be confident and resilient and feel positive about their future. When children are not safe at home, they need to be provided with an alternative safe and nurturing environment. Children in out-of-home care have the same needs and rights to be supported, to be loved and to have their safety requirements met. Youth Researchers from *Our Rights, Voices, Stories*, a 2022 QFCC initiative, stated that for a child living in out-of-home care, feeling loved and safe means living in an environment that cultivates a feeling of ‘home’, where they feel secure, know they are heard and understood, are supported and can learn and grow.

In our inaugural report we used the following indicators to measure whether Queensland children and their families are valued, loved and safe.

Table 6: Domain 1 goals and indicators

Domain	Goal	Indicator groupings
Domain 1: Children, young people and families are valued, loved and safe	Goal 1.1: Families meet the needs of their children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 1.1.1: Children and young people have loving, trusting relationships with family and other adults</li> <li>Indicator 1.1.2: Children and young people in out-of-home care feel cared for and have trusting relationships with adults</li> </ul>
	Goal 1.2: Children and young people feel they are important to others and feel valued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 1.2.1: Children and young people have supportive, trusting relationships with friends</li> <li>Indicator 1.2.2: Children and young people feel positive about their future</li> </ul>
	Goal 1.3: Families are safe places for children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 1.3.1: Children and young people are not impacted by family conflict</li> <li>Indicator 1.3.2: Children and young people feel safe at home</li> <li>Indicator 1.3.3: Children and young people are protected from domestic and family violence</li> <li>Indicator 1.3.4: Where there are concerns about a child’s or young person’s safety, they can be cared for away from home</li> <li>Indicator 1.3.5: There are sufficient foster and kinship carers to accommodate children and young people in out-of-home care</li> <li>Indicator 1.3.6: Children and young people in out-of-home care feel safe and secure</li> <li>Indicator 1.3.7: Children and young people are supported during parental imprisonment</li> </ul>
	Goal 1.4: Communities are safe places for children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 1.4.1: Children and young people can access support services</li> <li>Indicator 1.4.2: Children and young people do not experience bullying</li> <li>Indicator 1.4.3: Children and young people feel safe in their community</li> <li>Indicator 1.4.4: Children and young people are not victims of crime</li> <li>Indicator 1.4.5: Few children and young people are involved with the youth justice system</li> <li>Indicator 1.4.6: Children and young people’s deaths are prevented</li> </ul>

Key points from last year’s report showed that a substantial majority of Queenslanders, exceeding 80% of children and young people and 90% of parents and caregivers, state they experience loving and trusting family relationships (page 37). This sentiment is reinforced with 90% of children saying they have fun with their parents

(page 37), while 75% of parents feel they have adequate time to spend with children (page 38). Positive relationships extend beyond the immediate family, with a majority of Queensland children reporting favourable associations with friends (page 42) and 68% feeling secure in their surroundings (page 59). Beyond the immediate family unit, more than 80% of parents feel that their neighbourhood is a good place to raise children (page 59).

Amidst these positive statistics, challenges for Queensland are also evident. Approximately 21% of young people identify relationships with family, friends, and others as their most significant personal hurdle, and only half of young people expressed optimism about their future (page 43). Additionally, bullying affects a notable one-third of Queensland children (page 57) and troublingly 10% of young Queenslanders disclosed that their parents would remain oblivious if they failed to return home (page 46). Social concerns also come to the forefront, with an observable increase in domestic and family violence court lodgements involving juvenile victims (page 47). Amidst these societal dynamics, there is a positive note with child mortality rates in Queensland showing a declining trend.

#### Relevant United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Articles

Article 5 (Parental guidance and child's evolving capacities), Article 9 (Separation from parents), Article 10 (Family reunification), Article 11 (Kidnapping and trafficking), Article 19 (Protection from violence, abuse, neglect), Article 20 (Children without families), Article 21 (Adoption), Article 25 (Review of treatment in care), Article 34 (Protection from sexual exploitation), Article 35 (Prevention of abduction, trafficking, sale of children), Article 36 (Protection from other forms of exploitation), Article 37(a, b, d) (No torture or degrading treatment, fair legal treatment), Article 39 (Rehabilitation of child victims of abuse, neglect, and exploitation), Article 40 (Rights in juvenile justice), Article 38 (Protection from armed conflict), Article 37(c) (Right to be separated from adults in detention),

The data sources we used included:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics, Marriages and divorces in Australia, 2022
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, Prisoners in Australia, 2022
- Australian Child Wellbeing Project, Final report of the Australian Child Wellbeing Project, 2016
- Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, administrative data, 2023
- Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care survey, 2022
- Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training, unpublished data request, 2023
- Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, 2021
- Mission Australia, Australian Youth Survey Report, 2022
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, PISA 2018 Results: What School Life Means for Student's Lives, 2018
- Queensland Corrective Services, unpublished data request, 2023
- Queensland Courts, unpublished data request, 2023
- Queensland Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, Youth Justice Census, 2022
- Queensland Family and Child Commission, Australian child death statistics, 2020
- Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023
- Queensland Family and Child Commission, Workforce survey, 2022
- Queensland Family and Child Commission, Deaths of children and young people Queensland Annual Report 2021-22, 2022
- Queensland Family and Child Commission, Parent Voice survey, 2023
- Queensland Family and Child Commission, Voices of Hope: Growing up in Queensland, 2020
- Queensland Government Statistician's Office, 2021 Census custom community profiles, unpublished data request, 2023
- Queensland Police, unpublished data request, 2023
- Realwell, Rumble's Quest measure of child wellbeing, unpublished data request, 2023

## **Discussion**

- 1. How would you measure if Queensland children are:**
  - Valued
  - loved
  - safe
  
- 2. What information do you use to know if the children in your life are:**
  - Valued
  - Loved
  - safe
  
- 3. Can you recommend specific data that the Commission should use?**

## 2. Families have sufficient material basics to meet their needs

Having sufficient material basics to meet needs means that families have access to suitable housing and transport, nutritious food, clothing, technology and items such as school supplies or sporting equipment. It also means families have a household income that is adequate to pay their living expenses and to provide their children with access to essential resources.

When families have access to sufficient material basics, their children are physically healthier, their social and emotional development is more likely to be on track and they do better at school. In households where families have an adequate income, children are less likely to be exposed to parental stress, poor parenting and family violence.

As young people become older, they too need employment opportunities to support the development of their own financial independence. Children and young people in out-of-home care have the same material needs as other children and young people. They will also often have a greater need for support with their transition to independent living.

Government policies around rates of family support payments and levels of investment in public housing and community infrastructure can significantly impact on the material wellbeing of children, young people and families.

In our inaugural report we used the following indicators to measure whether Queensland families have sufficient material basics to meet their needs.

Table 16: Domain 2 goals and indicators

Domain	Goal	Indicator groupings
Domain 2: Families have sufficient material basics to meet their needs	Goal 2.1: Children, young people and families have financial stability and money for necessities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 2.1.1: Children and young people are not being raised in poverty</li> <li>Indicator 2.1.2: Parents and carers are employed</li> <li>Indicator 2.1.3: Families can access family support payments when needed</li> <li>Indicator 2.1.4: Families have sufficient income to be able to provide necessities for their children and young people</li> <li>Indicator 2.1.5: Young people are employed</li> <li>Indicator 2.1.6: Young people leaving care receive sufficient support to transition to adulthood</li> </ul>
	Goal 2.2: Children, young people and families have adequate, secure, stable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 2.2.1: Home ownership and rent is affordable for families</li> <li>Indicator 2.2.2: Families and young people do not experience homelessness</li> <li>Indicator 2.2.3: Families and young people do not live in overcrowded homes</li> <li>Indicator 2.2.4: Families can access public and social housing when needed</li> <li>Indicator 2.2.5: Children and young people in out-of-home care experience a low number of placement changes</li> </ul>
	Goal 2.3: Children, young people and their families have access to food, suitable and safe technology, transport and personal items (clothing, school supplies, or sporting equipment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 2.3.1: Children and young people have food security</li> <li>Indicator 2.3.2: Children and young people have access to suitable and safe communication and technology including access to the internet</li> <li>Indicator 2.3.3: Children, young people and their families have access to a vehicle or other suitable transport</li> <li>Indicator 2.3.4: Children and young people have access to essential personal items</li> </ul>

Key points from last year’s report showed that nearly 3 million Queenslanders are actively employed, and the median family income is over \$100,000 (page 79). Queensland parents are optimistic about the future with 75% agreeing there will be job opportunities for their children when they are older (page 85). Unfortunately the socioeconomic landscape reveals clear disparities, with over one-fifth of the Queensland population living below the poverty line (page 77) and 30% of parents reporting that the cost of living, poverty, financial constraints, and

inflation are the biggest issues impacting their households (page 75). 61% of parents express difficulty in meeting day-to-day expenses, including the costs of food and bills (page 82).

Unemployment poses a tangible hurdle, as evidenced by the fact that 11% of families with a child under 15 have no parent employed (page 79) and 10% of Queenslanders aged 15 to 24 find themselves neither in education nor employment (page 85). The vulnerability of one-parent families is accentuated by their higher likelihood of renting rather than owning a home, rendering them more susceptible to fluctuations in rental prices (page 93). Homelessness is also distressingly apparent, with over 8,000 young Queenslanders reported to be homeless on census night, and an additional 19,000 awaiting housing offers on the public housing register (pages 95 and 99). Amidst these challenges, transportation emerges as a point of interest with 5% of Queensland families lacking a vehicle, however, a reassuring 81% of families express ease in getting their children to school (page 105).

#### Relevant UNCRC Articles

Article 27(3) (Adequate standard of living), Article 32 (Protection from economic exploitation), Article 18(1,2) (Parental responsibilities and state assistance), Article 27(4) (Recovery of maintenance for standard of living), Article 26 (Right to social security), Article 27(1,2) (Adequate standard of living, parental support)

The data sources we used included:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics, Estimating Homelessness: Census, 2021
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census, 2021
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census: Community profiles, Table 02, 2021
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census: Community profiles, Table 32, 2021
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, Education and Work in Australia, 2022
- Australian Child Wellbeing Project, Final report of the Australian Child Wellbeing Project, 2016
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Specialist homelessness services annual report 2021-22, 2022
- Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, administrative data, 2023
- Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care survey, 2022
- Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, unpublished data request, 2023
- Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy, unpublished data request, 2023
- Department of Transport and Main Roads, unpublished data request, 2023
- Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, 2021
- Mission Australia, Australian Youth Survey Report, 2022
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, International comparison of poverty rates 0–17 years, 2023
- Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023
- Queensland Foster and Kinship Care, Foster and Kinship Carers Survey 2022 Report, 2022
- Queensland Government Statistician Office, 2021 Census custom report- Household tenure by lone parent status and sex, unpublished data request, 2023
- Queensland Government Statistician's Office, 2021 Census custom community profiles, table 42, unpublished data request, 2023
- Queensland Government Statistician's Office, 2021 Census custom community profiles, unpublished data request, 2023
- Queensland Residential Tenancies Authority, unpublished data request, 2023

### Discussion

1. How would you measure if Queensland families have sufficient material basics to meet their needs?
2. What information do you use to know if Queensland families have sufficient material basics to meet their needs?
3. Can you recommend specific data that the Commission should use to monitor if Queensland families have sufficient material basics to meet their needs?

### 3. Children, young people and their families are healthy

Being healthy means that children, young people and their parents and carers have good physical and emotional wellbeing. Healthy children are more likely to become healthy adults. They are better able to cope with adversity and the challenges of everyday life, have healthier immune systems, feel a sense of personal wellbeing, and interact with their surroundings in ways that promote successful development.

For children to be healthy, they need to grow up in healthy, supportive and nurturing environments. Healthy environments include having access to timely and supportive health care services.

Parents and carers play a critical role in providing the care young children need to be happy and healthy and to grow and develop well, so supporting the health of parents and carers also promotes the health of children.

Children entering out-of-home care often have unmet health needs, including undiagnosed and untreated psychological, physical and developmental issues, which can impact on other areas of their life such as education and their ability to make lasting relationships.

In our inaugural report we used the following indicators to measure whether Queensland children, young people and their parents are healthy.

Table 30: Domain 3 goals and indicators

Domain	Goal	Indicator groupings
Domain 3: Children, young people and their families are healthy	<b>Goal 3.1: Newborns and infants are given the best start to life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 3.1.1: Women have healthy pregnancies</li> <li>Indicator 3.1.2: The number of births to women aged under 20 years is low</li> <li>Indicator 3.1.3: Babies are healthy at birth</li> <li>Indicator 3.1.4: Newborns and infants have the best start to life</li> </ul>
	<b>Goal 3.2: Parents and carers are supported to maintain their own health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 3.2.1: Parents and carers have good physical and mental health and levels of parental substance use are low</li> <li>Indicator 3.2.2: Parents and carers facing health challenges receive support</li> </ul>
	<b>Goal 3.3: Children and young people have good physical health and receive appropriate support for their physical health needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 3.3.1: Children and young people have good physical health</li> <li>Indicator 3.3.2: Children are immunised</li> <li>Indicator 3.3.3: Children and young people with disability have their support needs met</li> <li>Indicator 3.3.4: Children and young people have healthy teeth</li> <li>Indicator 3.3.5: Young people avoid smoking, drinking and using other drugs</li> <li>Indicator 3.3.6: Children and young people lead a healthy lifestyle</li> <li>Indicator 3.3.7: Children and young people receive appropriate and timely support for their health needs</li> <li>Indicator 3.3.8: Rates of non-preventable child deaths are reducing</li> </ul>
	<b>Goal 3.4: Children and young people have good mental health and receive appropriate support for their mental health needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 3.4.1: Children and young people have high levels of wellbeing and good mental health</li> <li>Indicator 3.4.2: Children and young people receive appropriate support for their mental and emotional health needs</li> <li>Indicator 3.4.3: Young people with eating disorders receive treatment</li> </ul>

Key points from last year’s report showed that Queenslanders are generally healthy with 58% of children and young people assessing their health as either excellent or good (page 113). The main childhood health conditions in Queensland are asthma, mental health conditions and diabetes (page 126). Encouragingly, there has been a significant decline in tobacco smoking rates among young individuals (page 113) and the proportion of young people abstaining from alcohol has notably risen to 73%, reflecting changing patterns in youth behaviours (page 113). More Queensland youths are accessing the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) (page 113) and two-thirds of Queensland children meet the recommended daily fruit intake, while merely 3% adhere to the recommended vegetable servings (page 136).

Amongst the overall good levels of health, there is room for improvement in some cohorts and specific issues. Less than 40% of single parents rate their health as good (page 123), and with 33% of children aged 5 to 14 have never visited a dentist (page 134). Mental health emerges as a prominent concern, with one-third of Queensland young people identifying it as their primary personal challenge (page 139). Additionally, stress is a significant worry for two in five young Queenslanders, and 14% express concerns about suicide (page 139). Disturbingly, around half of young people acknowledge the need for mental health support, but of these, just over half have access to the necessary assistance (page 145).

#### Relevant UNCRC Articles

Article 3(3) (Best interests of the child in institutions), Article 6 (Right to life, survival, and development), Article 18(3) (Support for parents in child-rearing), Article 23 (Rights of children with disabilities), Article 24 (Right to healthcare, clean environment), Article 25 (Periodic review of care), Article 26 (Right to social security), Article 27(1,2) (Right to adequate standard of living), Article 33 (Protection from substance abuse)

#### The data sources we used included:

- Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, unpublished data request, 2023
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census, 2021
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, National study of mental health and wellbeing 2020-21, 2021
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, Queensland community profile, 2021
- Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, Australian Immunisation Register (AIR), 2023
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australia's mothers and babies, 2022
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australia's mothers and babies: Antenatal care, 2022
- Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing, national perinatal data collection, 2021
- Cancer Council Queensland, Selected Queensland results from the 2017 ASSAD survey, 2018
- Commonwealth of Australia, Australian Early Development Census, custom table, 2015–2021
- Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care survey, 2022
- Department of Justice and Attorney General, unpublished data request, 2023
- Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, 2021
- Mission Australia, Australian Youth Survey Report, 2022
- National Disability Insurance Scheme, unpublished data request, 2023
- National Drug Strategy Household Survey, 2019
- Queensland Ambulance, unpublished data request, 2023
- Queensland Family and Child Commission, Child Death register, 2023
- Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023
- Queensland Family and Child Commission, Workforce survey, 2022
- Queensland Family and Child Commission, Deaths of children and young people Queensland Annual Report 2021-22, 2022
- Queensland Foster and Kinship Care, Foster and Kinship Carers Survey 2022 Report, 2022
- Queensland Government Statistician's Office, 2021 Census custom community profiles, table G19, unpublished data request, 2023;
- Queensland Government Statistician's Office, 2021 Census custom community profiles, unpublished data request, 2023
- Queensland Government Statistician's Office, estimated residential population data of Queensland 0-14 and 15-24 year olds, 2023
- Queensland Health, Chief Health Officer's Report, 2018
- Queensland Health, unpublished data request, 2023
- Queensland Parliamentary Committees, 2020-21 Budget Estimates Volume of Additional Information, 2021
- Realwell, Rumble's Quest measure of child wellbeing, unpublished data request, 2023
- Services Australia, Australian Immunisation Register, 2023
- Services Australia, unpublished data request, 2023

**Discussion**

1. How would you measure if Queensland children, young people and their families are healthy?
2. What information do you use to know if Queensland children, young people and their families are healthy?
3. Can you recommend specific data that the Commission should use to monitor if Queensland children, young people and their families are healthy?

#### 4. Children, young people and their families are engaged in education

Children and young people who do well at school are more likely to have strong support for their education from their parents or carers throughout childhood and adolescence. Parents and carers begin their children’s learning experiences informally from infancy, by sharing stories, singing songs and through day-to-day conversations. As toddlers and children get older, informal learning experiences at home are broadened through interactions within their community, including formal educational experiences such as kindergarten and primary school.

Families continue to support children’s education by listening to children read, volunteering at school and taking a regular interest in what they are learning. Increasingly, as children and young people get older, their educational experiences occur in formal settings such as school, vocational education and university and take on a greater focus on preparing for entry into the workforce.

Having positive learning experiences and successfully completing their education has many benefits for all children and young people. These include employment opportunities, career advancement and lifetime income, but also other outcomes including better lifelong health.

In our inaugural report we used the following indicators to measure whether Queensland children, young people and their families are engaged in education.

Table 45: Domain 4 goals and indicators

Domain	Goal	Indicator groupings
Domain 4: Children, young people and their families are engaged in education	Goal 4.1: Families are engaged with their children’s learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 4.1.1: Children are regularly read to at home</li> <li>Indicator 4.1.2: Families are actively engaged with their children’s school</li> </ul>
	Goal 4.2: Children receive early childhood education and are supported to transition into school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 4.2.1: Children participate in quality early childhood education and care</li> <li>Indicator 4.2.2: Children are supported to transition into school</li> </ul>
	Goal 4.3: Children and young people succeed at school and feel safe, included and valued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 4.3.1: Children and young people regularly attend school</li> <li>Indicator 4.3.2: Children and young people are able to meet academic standards</li> <li>Indicator 4.3.3: Children and young people do not experience suspensions and exclusions from school</li> <li>Indicator 4.3.4: Children and young people are able to cope with school pressures</li> <li>Indicator 4.3.5: Children and young people feel safe, included and valued at school</li> </ul>
	Goal 4.4: Young people successfully complete school and are equipped with life skills to transition into adulthood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 4.4.1: Young people complete high school</li> <li>Indicator 4.4.2: Young people are engaging with post-school education and training pathways</li> <li>Indicator 4.4.3: Youth unemployment is low</li> </ul>

Key points from last year’s report showed that the majority of Queensland children are meeting national academic standards and 80% of 20 to 24-year-old Queenslanders having completed year 12 or its equivalent, surpassing the national average (page 186). Parental involvement is noteworthy, with 70% of parents reporting they regularly read with their children (page 159) and 90% of children have parents who express confidence supporting their child’s academic success (page 170). Nearly half of Queensland’s young people, at 48%, express confidence in achieving their work and study goals, surpassing the national average. The role of educators in fostering a positive learning environment is also evident, with 80% of year 4 students and 60% of year 8 students reporting the presence of a caring teacher or adult in their lives (page 180) and more than 75% of Queensland students feel well-supported by their teachers (page 179).

Despite these encouraging indicators, 47% of young people reported concerns about school and study issues (page 178), and challenges in the form of disciplinary issues occurred at high rates, with over 7% of Queensland state school students experiencing a disciplinary absence (page 177). Amidst Queensland’s educational

accomplishments, the job market poses a challenge for some, with 26% of Queenslanders aged 15 to 19 reporting that they are currently not in paid employment but actively seeking work (page 192).

#### Relevant UNCRC Articles & Context

Article 17 (Access to information, media), Article 28 (Right to education), Article 29 (Education goals: holistic development, respect for rights and culture), Article 31 (Right to leisure, play, and cultural activities)

#### The data sources we used included:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics, Education and Work Table 15 – Engagement in employment and/or study, 2023
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, Education and Work Table 34 – Highest non-school qualification bachelor degree or above, 2023
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour force status for 15-24 year olds by State, Territory and Educational attendance, Table 16, 2023
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, Schools Australia, 2022
- Australian Child Wellbeing Project, Final report of the Australian Child Wellbeing Project, 2016
- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, NAPLAN Results, 2023
- Australian Government Department of Education, Child Care Subsidy data report- September quarter 2022, 2022
- Commonwealth of Australia, Australian Early Development Census, 2021
- Commonwealth of Australia, Australian Early Development Census, custom table, 2022
- Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care survey, 2022
- Department of Education, Annual survey of early school leavers, unpublished data request, 2023
- Department of Education, Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), unpublished data request, 2023
- Department of Education, Student Opinion Survey
- Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training, Apprentice and trainee participation activity data and statistics, 2023
- Mission Australia, Australian Youth Survey Report, 2022
- Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023
- Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023
- Queensland Foster and Kinship Care, Foster and Kinship Carers Survey 2022 Report, 2022
- Queensland Government Statistician's Office, 2021 Census custom community profiles, table G16, unpublished data request, 2023
- Queensland Government Statistician's Office, 2021 Census custom community profiles, tables G01 and G15, unpublished data request, 2023
- Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre, 2022 ATAR Report release, 2023
- Realwell, Rumble's Quest measure of child wellbeing, unpublished data request, 2023

#### Discussion

1. **How would you measure if Queensland Children, young people and their families are engaged in education?**
2. **What information do you use to know if Queensland Children, young people and their families are engaged in education?**
3. **Can you recommend specific data that the Commission should use to monitor if Queensland children, young people and their families are engaged in education?**

#### 4. Children and young people are participating in their community and in decisions about their lives

It is important for children and young people’s wellbeing that they have opportunities to actively participate within their community. Participation can take many forms—including children and young people being involved in leisure and recreational activities, social groups, or volunteering.

Participation is also about children and young people having a voice, being listened to, and taken seriously within their community. It means having a say in decisions that impact them and being empowered to speak out and express themselves. Children and young people in out-of-home care have the same needs and rights as other children, to participate in their communities and to be involved in decisions about their lives.

In our inaugural report we used the following indicators to measure whether Queensland children and young people feel they have opportunities for participation.

Table 68: Domain 5 goals and indicators

Domain	Goal	Indicator groupings
Domain 5: Children and young people are participating in their community and in decisions about their lives	Goal 5.1: Communities are positive places for children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 5.1.1: Children and young people feel proud to be part of their community and feel that it has the things they need for a positive and thriving future</li> </ul>
	Goal 5.2: Children and young people can enjoy leisure and recreation activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 5.2.1: Children and young people think there are a lot of fun things to do in their neighbourhood</li> <li>Indicator 5.2.2: Children and young people participate in recreational and leisure activities</li> <li>Indicator 5.2.3: Children and young people safely engage with social media and other digital technologies</li> </ul>
	Goal 5.3: Children and young people have opportunities to contribute to and participate in their community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 5.3.1: Children and young people participate in community-building activities</li> <li>Indicator 5.3.2: Young people are enrolled to vote</li> <li>Indicator 5.3.3: Young people have a driver’s licence</li> <li>Indicator 5.3.4: Young people have employment opportunities</li> <li>Indicator 5.3.5: Children and young people can make decisions about their lives</li> </ul>

Key points from last year’s report showed that overall Queensland is a place where young people are part of a strong community, with 53% of children and young people expressing pride in being a part of their community (page 201) and 52% believing that their community possesses the necessary elements for a positive and thriving future (page 202). Furthermore, a significant 60% of young Queenslanders describe their communities as places where they feel they belong (page 203) and Queensland boasts a higher rate of youth engagement in sports, arts, and cultural pursuits compared to the rest of Australia (page 209). The vibrancy of local neighbourhoods is evident with the majority of young Queenslanders saying there are fun things to do in their neighbourhood and 25% of Queensland young people reporting participation in youth groups over the past year (page 218). In the digital realm, 75% of parents express confidence in their ability to adequately monitor their child's online activities (page 213), however, the pervasive influence of social media is evident with 10% of 15 to 19-year-old Queenslanders identifying social media as their greatest personal concern (page 213).

#### Relevant UNCRC Articles

Article 12 (Right to be heard in matters affecting the child), Article 13 (Right to freedom of expression), Article 14 (Freedom of thought, conscience, religion), Article 15 (Freedom of association), Article 16 (Right to privacy), Article 17 (Access to appropriate information)

The data sources we used included:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census, 2021
- Australian Child Wellbeing Project, Final report of the Australian Child Wellbeing Project, 2016
- Australian Electoral Commission, unpublished data request, 2023
- Australian Government eSafety Commissioner, The digital lives of Aussie teens, 2021
- Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care survey, 2022
- Department of Transport and Main Roads, unpublished data request, 2023
- Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, 2021
- Mission Australia, Australian Youth Survey Report, 2022
- Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023
- Queensland Family and Child Commission, Voices of Hope: Growing up in Queensland, 2020
- Queensland Foster and Kinship Care, Foster and Kinship Carers Survey 2022 Report, 2022
- Realwell, Rumble's Quest measure of child wellbeing, unpublished data request, 2023

### **Discussion**

- 1. How would you measure if Queensland children and young people feel they have opportunities for participation?**
- 2. What information do you use to know if Queensland children and young people feel they have opportunities for participation?**
- 3. Can you recommend specific data that the Commission should use to monitor if Queensland children and young people feel they have opportunities for participation?**

## 5. Children and young people feel connected to their culture and safe and supported around expressing their identity, and cultural and spiritual beliefs

Identity relates to a person’s sense of self and their understanding of who they are, both individually and within their cultural and social context. All children, young people and their families have the right to feel safe and supported both at home and in the community to express their identity, regardless of gender, sexuality, culture, language or spiritual beliefs. Both identity and culture are influenced by many factors including family, country, language, religion and/or spiritual beliefs, health, feeling valued, loved and safe and being able to participate in the community. Each of these factors both influence and are influenced by identity and culture.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, being strong in identity, culture and language comes from their relationships with their family, their community and their land. Being strong in culture drives confidence and wellbeing. Having a positive sense of identity and culture means that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people have a sense of cultural connectedness, feelings of belonging and acceptance at home and in the community – and confidence that their identity, culture, and community are respected and valued.

Children and young people in out-of-home care have the same needs and rights as other children, to be supported in expressing their identity, culture and spiritual beliefs. Our Rights, Voices, Stories youth researchers agreed that identity for them means knowing who they are, where they are from, and having a positive sense of self-identity which is not defined by their involvement with the child protection system.

In our inaugural report we used the following indicators to measure whether Queensland children and young people feel safe and supported around expressing their identity, and cultural and spiritual beliefs.

Table 94: Domain 6 goals and indicators

Domain	Goal	Indicator groupings
Domain 6: Children and young people feel connected to their culture and safe and supported around expressing their identity, and cultural and spiritual beliefs	Goal 6.1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people feel supported in their cultural identity and spiritual wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 6.1.1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people feel connected to and supported in their culture</li> <li>Indicator 6.1.2: The systems supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are culturally safe</li> </ul>
	Goal 6.2: Children, young people and their families feel safe and supported in expressing their identity, culture and spiritual beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 6.2.1: Children and young people report a sense of belonging through spiritual or cultural beliefs</li> <li>Indicator 6.2.2: Children and young people have confidence that their identity, culture, and spiritual beliefs are respected and valued</li> <li>Indicator 6.2.3: Funding is provided to support multicultural events</li> </ul>

Key points from last year’s report showed that a substantial 83% of Queensland children express happiness, and 88% like being themselves (page 140). The number of Queenslanders who spoke an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language has increased (page 231), and 68% of young Aboriginal young people in care said they feel supported to follow their culture. In contrast only 2% of current classroom teachers in Queensland identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples (page 234) and within the social fabric of Queensland, a concerning reality emerges with 30% of young people reporting that they encounter discrimination based on their race, culture, mental health, or sexuality (page 229) while more than half of children and young people reporting having no spiritual or cultural beliefs (page 238).

#### Relevant UNCRC Articles and context

Article 7 (Right to a name and nationality), Article 8 (Preservation of identity), Article 29(1c) (Education fostering respect for culture, identity), Article 30 (Rights of minority and Indigenous children to culture, religion, language) Article 22 (Rights of refugee children)

The data sources we used included:

- Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care survey, 2022
- Department of Education, Australian Early Development Census, custom data, 2023
- Mission Australia, Australian Youth Survey Report, 2022
- Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023
- Queensland Family and Child Commission, Workforce survey, 2022

#### Discussion

1. **How would you measure if Queensland children and young people feel connected to their culture and safe and supported around expressing their identity, and cultural and spiritual beliefs?**
2. **What information do you use to know if Queensland Children and young people feel connected to their culture and safe and supported around expressing their identity, and cultural and spiritual beliefs?**
3. **Can you recommend specific data that the Commission should use to monitor if Queensland children and young people feel connected to their culture and safe and supported around expressing their identity, and cultural and spiritual beliefs?**